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Technical Note 56

Preliminary Report on Lumber Production for 1942 in Iowa<sup>1/</sup>

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To most people, Iowa, located in the heart of the Corn Belt, seems far removed from the whir of sawmills. Preliminary results of the census of 1942 lumber production indicate a production of 56,072,000 board feet by 823 active sawmills. These, with the 266 reported idle, total 1,089 sawmills for the State. Little of the production represents import of logs, such as occurred years ago when lumbermen rafted millions of feet of white pine logs from the Lake States down the Mississippi River to Lansing, Dubuque, Clinton, Davenport, Muscatine, and other river towns in Iowa. The importance of the present industry and its product grows under present war conditions with current restrictions on movement of lumber for local and farm uses from distant regions.

Final production statistics which are now being compiled by the Bureau of the Census and which will be released by that agency in due time, are based on a complete coverage of the industry by mail supplemented by a field canvass of delinquents and new mills by the Forest Service. Nineteen-forty-two is the first year that lumber production has been obtained in the entire State in this manner.

By kinds of wood, oak led (36 percent), followed by cottonwood, elm, walnut, maple and basswood. (table 1). Softwoods account for only 0.7 percent of the total and that came almost entirely from planted windbreaks and shelterbelts. The relatively important place of the very small farmer-owned and custom mill which produces less than 50 M board feet per year is noteworthy. A little over 16 percent of the State's 1942 production originated at mills of this character.

Table 1. -- Estimated lumber production in Iowa by kind of wood and size class of mill, in 1942

Kind of wood	: Quantity produced annually :		Total	Proportion		
	: by mills producing:					
	49M & less	50M or more				
Softwoods <sup>1/</sup>	M ft. b.m.	M ft. b.m.	M ft. b.m.	Percent		
Cedar	2	7	9	-		
Fir (balsam)	17	36	53	0.1		
Larch	2	73	75	0.1		

<sup>1/</sup> Preliminary data subject to revision. Final production statistics will be released by the Bureau of the Census. Both preliminary and final statistics are the result of surveys made by the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce and the Statistics Division, War Production Board. In Iowa the State Forester and the Extension Service, Iowa State College gave active support and assistance to the work.

(over)

Table 1 (Cont'd)

Kind of wood	Quantity produced annually		Total	Proportion		
	by mills producing:					
	49M & less	50M or more				
	M ft. b.m.	M ft. b.m.	M ft. b.m.	Percent		
<u>Softwoods (cont'd)</u>						
Pine (white)	71	73	144	0.3		
Pine (yellow)	19	33	52	0.1		
Spruce	10	48	58	0.1		
Total Softwoods	121	270	391	0.7		
<u>Hardwoods</u>						
Ash	184	631	815	1.4		
Basswood	451	2,720	3,171	5.7		
Birch (river)	55	287	342	0.6		
Cottonwood	2,375	9,269	11,644	20.8		
Elm	1,891	7,058	8,949	16.0		
Hickory	68	220	288	0.5		
Maple	695	3,618	4,313	7.7		
Oak	2,977	17,143	20,120	35.8		
Sycamore	54	266	320	0.6		
Walnut	108	5,368	5,476	9.8		
<u>Other:</u>						
Black cherry	7	7	14	-		
Box elder	4	2	6	-		
Butternut	-	41	41	0.1		
Hackberry	19	22	41	0.1		
H. locust	-	5	5	-		
Willow	47	89	136	0.2		
Total Hardwoods	8,935	46,746	55,681	99.3		
Total all woods	9,056	47,016	56,072	100.0		
Percent	16.2	83.8	100.0	-		

1/ Softwood lumber saved predominantly from logs cut in plantations established during the 1860's to 1890's. The "larch" is European larch and the "spruce" is Norway spruce.

Table 2 gives the production and number of mills by counties.

Table 2. -- Estimated lumber production in Iowa and number of sawmills  
by size class of mill, in 1942[1]

County or counties	Production class						Total: mills: Production: Mills	Active mills			
	Idle :49 M per year or less			:50 M per year or more				No.	M ft. b.m.	No.	
	Mills	Mills	Production	Mills	Production	Mills					
	No.	No.	M ft. b.m.	No.	M ft. b.m.	No.	No.	M ft. b.m.	No.		
Adair & Union	1	3	20	3	239	7	259		6		
Adams, Montgomery & Pottawattamie	10	8	66	3	1,056	21	1,122		11		
Allamakee	7	15	288	15	3,315	37	3,603		30		
Appanoose	4	13	275	6	470	23	745		19		
Audubon, Harrison & Shelby	4	7	174	3	679	14	853		10		
Benton	1	5	82	3	203	9	285		8		
Blackhawk	1	4	47	5	631	10	728		9		
Boone, Marshall & Story	6	7	118	4	848	17	966		11		
Bremer	-	10	174	3	635	13	809		13		
Buchanan & Delaware	1	15	298	6	948	22	1,246		21		
Buena Vista, Cal- houn, Cherokee, Ida, Pocahontas, Sac & Woodbury	14	7	121	3	998	24	1,119		10		
Butler, Cerro Gordo, Franklin & Grundy	4	7	164	5	404	16	568		12		
Carroll	-	3	57	-	-	3	57		3		
Cass	2	-	-	-	-	2	-		-		
Cedar	3	6	54	5	1,035	14	1,039		11		
Chickasaw & Winneshiek	8	25	379	4	550	37	729		29		
Clarke	1	6	56	3	110	10	166		9		
Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, O'Brien & Osceola	2	6	119	3	514	11	633		9		
Clayton	12	30	540	15	4,836	57	5,376		45		
Clinton & Jones	5	7	82	6	946	18	1,028		13		
Crawford	1	4	43	-	-	5	43		4		
Dallas & Polk	8	10	206	5	949	21	1,155		13		
Davis	6	11	221	6	488	23	709		17		
Decatur, Lucas & Wayne	12	19	337	5	372	36	709		24		
Des Moines	6	8	82	4	1,778	18	1,860		12		
Dubuque	5	13	115	13	6,203	31	6,318		26		
Fayette	3	14	203	7	831	24	1,034		21		
Floyd	5	5	97	-	-	10	97		5		
Fremont	1	7	72	3	381	11	453		10		
Greene	2	-	-	3	217	5	217		3		
Guthrie	2	3	9	3	320	8	329		6		
Hamilton, Hancock, Kossuth & Wright	5	6	47	3	498	14	545		9		
Hardin	3	9	60	4	396	16	456		13		
Henry & Louisa	10	22	358	6	528	38	886		28		

Table 2 (Cont'd)

County or counties	Production class				Total mills	Active mills			
	Idle mills		49 M per year or less Mills			50 M per year or more Mills		mills	
	No.	No.	M ft. b.m.	No.		M ft. b.m.	No.	No.	
Howard & Mitchell	5	10	186	3	394	18	580	13	
Humboldt	-	3	39	-	-	3	39	3	
Iowa	2	10	172	7	859	19	1,031	17	
Jackson	3	17	328	10	1,408	30	1,736	27	
Jasper	2	6	140	3	403	11	543	9	
Jefferson &									
Keokuk	6	18	330	5	317	29	647	23	
Johnson	7	17	355	6	770	30	1,125	23	
Lee	6	3	65	7	602	16	667	10	
Linn	1	12	141	11	2,528	24	2,669	23	
Lyon			(no sawmills found)						
Madison & Warren	8	15	184	3	200	26	384	28	
Mahaska	3	11	226	5	265	19	491	16	
Marion	5	14	281	5	912	24	1,193	19	
Mills	7	3	30	-	-	10	30	3	
Monona	6	6	120	-	-	12	120	6	
Monroe	1	4	71	3	256	8	327	7	
Muscatine	6	5	66	5	2,084	16	2,150	10	
Page	-	4	101	-	-	4	101	4	
Palo Alto	1	3	35	-	-	4	33	3	
Plymouth	3	5	38	-	-	8	38	5	
Poweshiek & Tama	12	15	258	6	1,094	33	1,352	21	
Ringgold & Taylor	5	9	106	3	231	17	537	12	
Scott	5	7	164	-	-	12	164	7	
Sioux			(no sawmills found)						
Van Buren	2	7	123	7	1,518	16	1,641	14	
Wapello	3	7	137	3	606	13	743	10	
Washington	7	15	254	10	742	32	996	25	
Webster	3	12	111	4	261	19	572	16	
Winnebago & Worth	2	6	33	3	338	11	371	9	
Total	266	559	9,056	264	47,016	1,089	56,072	323	

1/ Several counties have been combined to avoid disclosing data for individual establishments.

The total production provides added valuable information when it is segregated into the portions manufactured by mills of different total output. In table 3, besides the relatively large portion manufactured by small producers, the production of medium-sized operations accounted for about 50 percent of the 1942 production; and the relatively few half- to one-million-foot operations, and those producing 1 to 5 million board feet accounted for about a seventh and a fifth of Iowa's 1942 production, respectively.

Table 3. -- Number and estimated production of sawmills  
by production classes, in Iowa, in 1942

Annual production class (M feet b.m.)	Sawmills	Lumber production	
	Number	M feet b.m.	Percent
1 - 49	559	9,056	16.2
50 - 499	239	28,382	50.6
500 - 999	17	7,792	13.9
1000 - 4999	8	10,842	19.3
Total	823	56,072	100.0

The sawmill industry carried relatively low stocks in Iowa. Out of the 823 producing sawmills, in 1942, only 60 reported carrying stocks (table 4). The small mills had very little on hand. The 50 M to 499 M class group, comprising about 40 percent of those reporting stocks, carried only a few hundred thousand feet. Although the two larger groups reported carrying around a half million feet, it actually amounts to little in relation to current needs for remanufacture, maintenance and repair. In all, these reported totals show a decline of about 100 M during the year. Apparently Iowa's lumber moved on to the farmer, consumer, concentration yard operator, retail yard, or to wood-using industry just about as fast as the sawmills produced it.

Table 4. -- Number and estimated production of mills reporting stocks  
on Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1942, and the amount of those stocks

Production class (M feet b.m.)	Mills reporting stocks on hand	Production	Jan. 1	Dec. 31
	Number	M feet b.m.	M feet b.m.	M feet b.m.
1 - 49	23	596	28	43
50 - 499	25	3,470	438	224
500 - 999	6	3,759	32	352
1000 - 4999	6	6,594	475	301
Total	60	14,419	1,023	920

